

## REMARKS

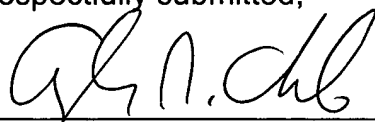
This amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed on October 2, 2001. The status of the claims is as follows: Claims 1-23 have been withdrawn from consideration due to previous amendments; and Claims 24-44 stand rejected. Per this amendment, no claims have been amended, cancelled, or added.

The Examiner rejected Claims 24-44 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,154,733 issued to Pierce, et al. (hereinafter "Pierce '733"). This position is respectfully traversed.

It is called to the Examiner's attention that Pierce '733 does not qualify as prior art. Pierce '733 and the parent of this application (U.S. Patent Application Number 09/224,256) were both filed on December 30, 1998. Therefore, Pierce '733 was not filed before the priority date of the present application.

Based on the reasoning provided above, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the 102 Rejection. Reconsideration of all claims and an early indication of allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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